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**High-level ministerial segment and policy dialogue
with heads of international organizations**

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Note by the Secretary-General**

Summary

The high-level ministerial segment of the fifth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests will focus on the future actions of the international arrangement on forests and the contribution of the Forum to the review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, as well as the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, as mandated by resolutions of the Economic and Social Council, as well as of the General Assembly. The format and modalities of the high-level ministerial segment, plenary sessions and round-table discussions are described, including the policy dialogue with heads of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and of other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments. The multi-stakeholder dialogue will be an integral part of the high-level segment.

* E/CN.18/2005/1.

** The delay in the submission of the present note was due to the need to obtain the necessary clearances.



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Introduction

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1. In its resolution 2000/35 of 18 October 2000, the Economic and Social Council decided that the main objective of the international arrangement on forests would be to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to that end. In order to achieve that objective and to carry out the six principal functions of the international arrangement as specified in its resolution, the Council also decided to establish the United Nations Forum on Forests as one of its subsidiary bodies, and to invite the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of other relevant international regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a Collaborative Partnership on Forests to support the work of the Forum.

2. In the same resolution, the Economic and Social Council further decided that the Forum should hold a high-level ministerial segment for two to three days, as required. The high-level segment could include a one-day policy dialogue with the heads of organizations participating in the Partnership, as well as other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments. The Forum should ensure the opportunity to receive and consider inputs from representatives of major groups as identified in Agenda 21, in particular through the organization of multi-stakeholder dialogues.

3. In its resolution 1/1, entitled "Multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2001-2005", the Forum recognized that clear strategic direction and strong political commitment to sustainable forest management were key to the successful fulfilment of every aspect of its mandate and also decided to hold high-level ministerial segments at its second and fifth sessions.

4. As part of the multi-year programme of work of the Forum, at its fifth session the Forum will focus on the following elements: (a) review of progress and consideration on future actions; (b) on the basis of the assessment referred to in paragraph 2 (e) of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 establishing the Forum, consideration of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests with a view to recommending them to the Council and through it to the General Assembly; and (c) review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, as referred to in paragraph 17 of Council resolution 2000/35. The Forum will also consider the common items that are to be addressed at each session. In accordance with the provisional agenda for the fifth session (E/CN.18/2005/1), the high-level ministerial segment will also have before it the report of the Secretary-General on the linkages between forests and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (E/CN.18/2005/___).¹

5. In view of the above, it is proposed that the high-level ministerial segment focus on the future international arrangement on forests and the contribution of the Forum to the review of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, as well as the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, as mandated by resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

6. Taking into careful consideration the views of the Bureau of the Forum at its fifth session and member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, it is proposed that the two-day high-level ministerial segment consist of plenary sessions and round-table discussions. A ministerial dialogue might also be held, as necessary, which could focus on the above-mentioned topics, with heads of member organizations of the Partnership, as well as of other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, and with high-level representatives of major groups.

7. It is proposed that the plenary, consisting of three sessions, focus and provide guidance on the following themes: (a) the role of forests and the Forum in the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields; and (b) the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, which should also address the institutional framework of the Forum, including its position within the United Nations system, as well as actions for the future.

8. The Bureau also decided to enrich the high-level segment with round-table discussions at which to address some of the most pressing forest policy issues needing increased international attention as well as new and emerging forests-related issues, where concrete action may be called for by the Forum. The round-table discussions will also provide an opportunity for direct dialogue on an informal basis among Ministers, and heads of member organizations of the Partnership, as well as of other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, and representatives of major groups.

I. Plenary session

9. In the consideration of the role of forests and the Forum in the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit and the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, the high-level ministerial segment may wish to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on the linkages between forests and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

10. It may be noted that in its resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004, the General Assembly decided to convene in New York in 2005 a high-level plenary meeting of the Assembly with the participation of Heads of State and Government, to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the fulfilment of all commitments contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, including the internationally agreed development goals and the global partnership required for their achievement, and of the progress made in the integrated and coordinated implementation, at the national, regional and international levels, of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, on the basis of a comprehensive report to be submitted by the Secretary-General.

11. In this regard, the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2004/44 of 22 July 2004 requested the functional commissions, the regional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies to contribute to the preparation of its input to the

high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly. It is therefore proposed that a ministerial message be sent to that meeting.

12. Regarding the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and consideration of future actions, it may be noted, that in paragraph 17 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35, the Council decided that the international arrangement on forests should be dynamic and should adapt to evolving conditions and that the effectiveness of that arrangement should be reviewed in five years, and also decided that the five-year review of that arrangement should also address the institutional framework of the Forum, including its position within the United Nations system.

13. For the above-mentioned review, it may be noted that detailed information is contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on (a) the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests, as referred to in paragraph 17 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/35 (E/CN.18/2005/__); (b) the review of progress and consideration of future actions (E/CN.18/2005/__); and (c) on the basis of the assessment referred to in paragraph 2 (e) of Council resolution 2000/35, consideration of the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests with a view to recommending them to the Council and through it to the General Assembly (E/CN.18/2005/__), as well as the report of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests (New York, 7-10 September 2004) (E/CN.18/2005/2).

14. Decisions by the Forum are expected on the future of, and the action needed on, the international arrangement on all types of forests. In this regard, Ministers may wish to provide guidance to the Forum on the matter, such as recommendations on the goals, targets, key functions and modalities of future international arrangements on forests, the institutional framework of the Forum, including its position within the United Nations system, and principal forest policy means and actions for the future.

II. Round tables

15. It is proposed that at the round tables, the discussions should focus on two critical issues: (a) restoration of the world's forests; and (b) forests, conflicts and governance. It is hoped that the round-table discussions will be conducive to a free exchange of ideas on those critical issues between the Ministers, heads of international organizations and representatives of major groups.

III. Ministerial dialogue with heads of organizations and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests

16. A ministerial dialogue may also be held, as necessary, that would focus on the above-mentioned topics, with heads of member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, with the participation of heads of other forest-related international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments, and representatives of major groups. It may be noted that the Partnership consists of 14 international organizations, namely, the Centre for International Forestry Research

(CIFOR); the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO); the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO); the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity; the secretariat of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF); the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa; the secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests; the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF); the World Bank; and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

17. For the dialogue, it may be noted that relevant and useful information is contained in the note by the Secretariat on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2005/5), as well as in the information document entitled "Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2005" (E/CN.18/2005/INF/1).

Notes

¹ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

